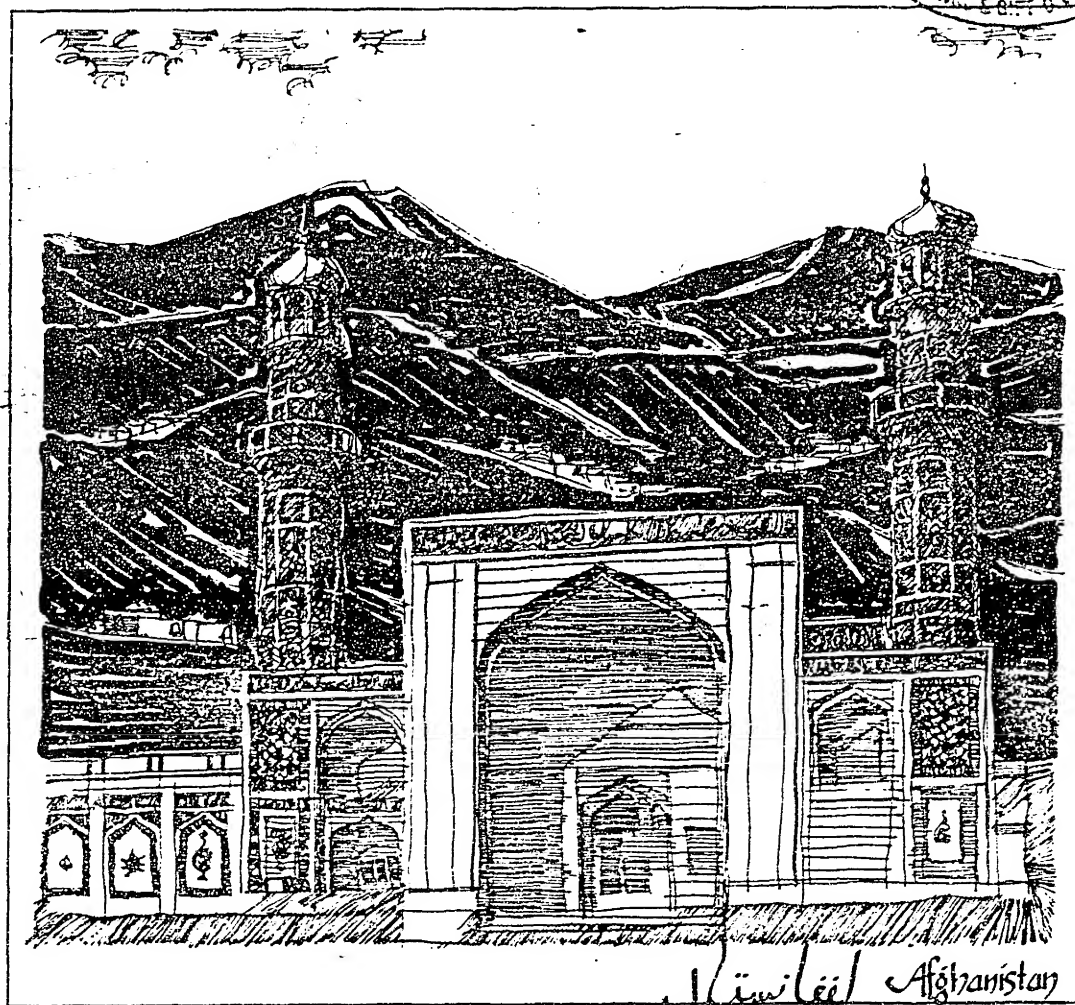
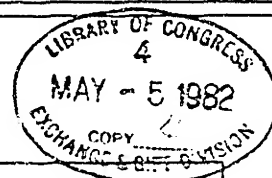


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*كابل افغانستان*



Although Afghanistan is primarily an agricultural country, only about 12% of the land is considered suitable for farming. Here, an Afghan farmer harvests grain. The field was irrigated with the help of U.S. assistance.

(Foreign Operations Administration photo)

# The United States and Afghanistan

In 1979 the kidnapping and death of U.S. Ambassador Adolph Dubois in February and the sudden invasion by Soviet forces the following December aroused the world's interest in Afghanistan. Until then, most Americans had, at best, a vague and somewhat romantic perception of Afghanistan as a wild and forbidding land of mountains and deserts of fierce and colorful tribesmen controlling the mountain passes through the Hindu Kush. Few Americans had visited Afghanistan and, to the extent that there was a general perception of Afghanistan in the United States, it was shaped and colored by Rudyard Kipling's tales of the Pathan tribesmen of the Khyber Pass and the Northwest Frontier and by James H. Michener's novel of the nomadic caravans that wound through the mountains and fabled cities of Central Asia.

Until the Second World War, the official U.S. view of Afghanistan was similarly unsophisticated. For more than two decades after the United Kingdom recognized the independence of Afghanistan in 1919, American officials cautiously received Afghan overtures for the establishment of full diplomatic relations. Diplomatic recognition was extended to Afghanistan in 1934, but the first U.S. Legation was not opened in Kabul until 1942. From the perspective of Washington during the 1920s and 1930s, there seemed little common

ground for fruitful relations between Afghanistan and the United States. To American officials, Afghanistan appeared remote, inaccessible, small, poor, and alien to Western culture. There was no tradition of past contacts to build upon and no untapped lucrative markets to lure American commerce. Officials in Washington were also concerned that conditions in Afghanistan were so primitive and dangerous that the safety of American citizens and property could not be guaranteed in the event of normal relations. Beyond that, Afghanistan was seen as a traditional sphere of British influence, and the British hinted that they were not inclined to open that sphere, despite British recognition of Afghan independence in 1919.

The Second World War重新 sized the strategic significance of Afghanistan as the gateway to South Asia. With German forces pushing into the Caucasus in 1942 and German agents active in Afghanistan, the United States moved to establish a legation in Kabul. The United States emerged from World War II with some firsthand understanding of Afghanistan and with international prestige and an inclination to play a larger role in world affairs.

In 1948 the United States and Afghanistan upgraded relations and exchanged ambassadors. The two countries settled into a relationship which endured, with some fluctuations, until

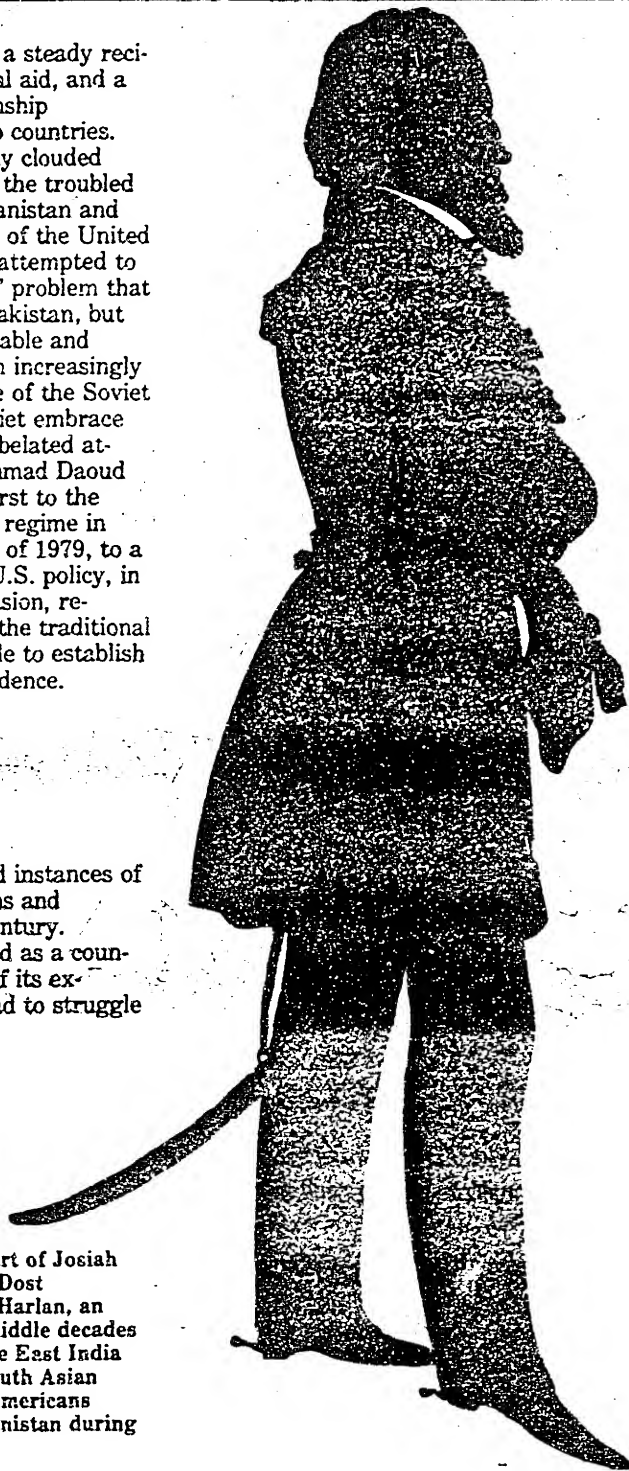
1978. Afghanistan became a steady recipient of U.S. developmental aid, and a limited commercial relationship developed between the two countries. One issue which periodically clouded U.S.-Afghan relations was the troubled relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the latter an ally of the United States. The United States attempted to mediate the "Pushtunistan" problem that divided Afghanistan and Pakistan, but the problem proved intractable and helped to push Afghanistan increasingly into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. Ultimately, the Soviet embrace became suffocating, and a belated attempt by President Mohammad Daoud in 1978 to draw back led first to the establishment of a Marxist regime in Kabul and then, at the end of 1979, to a full-scale Soviet invasion. U.S. policy, in response to the Soviet invasion, remained one of support for the traditional efforts of the Afghan people to establish and maintain their independence.

## First Contacts

There were few recorded instances of contacts between Americans and Afghans before the 20th century. Afghanistan was established as a country in 1747. During much of its existence, Afghanistan has had to struggle

Silhouette by Auguste Edouart of Josiah Harlan, "late aid de camp to Dost Mahomed, Ameer of Cabul." Harlan, an adventurer who during the middle decades of the 19th century served the East India Company and a number of South Asian Courts, was one of the few Americans known to have been in Afghanistan during that century.

(On loan to the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, from an anonymous lender)



to maintain a separate identity. Throughout most of the 19th century, it precariously balanced expansionist pressure from Russia in the north against that of British India from the south. By the end of the century, British influence in Kabul was predominant, as a result of two Anglo-Afghan wars. With British encouragement, the Kingdom of Afghanistan closed its border to nearly all foreign influence. The Muslim state was particularly uninterested in feelers received from American mission societies in the late decades of the 19th century. The closest the Protestant societies came to penetrating the forbidden kingdom was the stationing of a missionary near the Afghan border in India. Although he failed in his petition to the Government of British India for permission to enter Afghanistan, he succeeded in translating the Bible into Afghan dialects to be smuggled into Afghanistan.

The first American with more than passing contact with Afghanistan was Josiah Harlan, a colorful adventurer who had served the East India Company and a number of South Asian courts during the middle decades of the 19th century. Harlan, who as a young man apparently had left the United States under a legal cloud, came into contact with Afghanistan in the 1830s while in the service of Maharajah Ranjit Singh, prince of the Punjab. Harlan's intrigues took him into Afghanistan, disguised as a dervish in an attempt to start a revolution, and he later succeeded in bribing the brother of Amir Dost Mohammed to prevent a war. He ultimately came into the service of Dost Mohammed and helped prepare the Afghan infantry for victory over the Sikhs in the battle of Jamrud in 1837. He returned to Philadelphia in 1841 and served in the Army of the Potomac during the American Civil War. Harlan's service with the court of Dost Mohammed represented a very visible and prominent American contact with Afghanistan, but it was an isolated, individual experience and an exception to the almost total lack of contact between the United States and Afghanistan until the 20th century.

## The Question of Recognition

**T**he question of official contact between the United States and Afghanistan did not arise until the conclusion of the third of the Anglo-Afghan wars in 1919. In the treaty of Rawalpindi of August 1919, the United Kingdom recognized Afghanistan's independence. King Amanullah then set about the task of securing recognition from and establishing diplomatic representation with the rest of the international community. The Soviet Union extended recognition immediately in 1919. By 1923 Iran, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Italy, and France had also established full diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. As a result of King Amanullah's tour of Europe in state in 1927, Finland, Latvia, Liberia, Poland, Switzerland, Egypt, and Japan joined the list of countries recognizing Afghanistan. The United States was conspicuous in its cautious approach to formal recognition of Afghanistan.

In 1921 King Amanullah had dispatched an Afghan mission headed by Mohammed Wali Khan to Western Europe and the United States to propose formally the establishment of diplomatic relations. On July 18, 1921, Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes wrote to President Harding that the Afghan mission had arrived in Washington after having been received in Paris by the French Government. Hughes noted that the British Government had no objection to a similarly courteous reception in Washington but continued to view Afghanistan as part of its sphere of political influence. Secretary Hughes met with the mission on July 21 and later reported to the President that there was little commercial incentive for closer relations with Afghanistan. Harding received the mission on the same day, and Wali Khan delivered a letter from King Amanullah announcing his accession and expressing his wish for friendly relations between Afghanistan and the United States. On July 29, President Harding responded by letter to King Amanullah congratulating him on his accession but noting that the

matter of diplomatic relations "must be reserved for further consideration." Although the Harding Administration did not extend formal recognition to Afghanistan, the view developed in Washington that, in receiving the mission of Wali Khan and responding to King Amanullah's letter, President Harding had accorded informal recognition to the Afghan Government.

The Government of Afghanistan quickly demonstrated that it still sought formal recognition from the United States. On August 21, 1921, the American charge in Tehran, Cornelius Van H. Engert (later to be the first resident American Minister accredited to Afghanistan) reported that the Afghan Legation in Iran had approached him to encourage American interest in oil exploration in Afghanistan. Engert asked for instructions, and the Department of State responded that although formal recognition had not been extended to Afghanistan, the overture by the Afghan mission had laid a firm enough basis for Engert to proceed informally with his contacts in the Afghan Legation. Engert did so and received an invitation from King Amanullah to visit Afghanistan. From May to July 1922, Engert was a guest of the government in Kabul. He returned to Washington with another request from King Amanullah for the United States "to take cognizance of the independence of Afghanistan at an early date and to enter into diplomatic relations with it." In a memorandum of December 22, 1922, Engert passed on that request along with observations about the Afghan people and the primitive living conditions in the country which tended to confirm some of the preconceptions held in Washington. He noted the hospitality and cheerfulness of the Afghan people but also emphasized their primitive and warlike nature. Engert's account reflected a strong cultural bias and tended to describe conditions in the mountainous tribal areas rather than in the major cities such as Kabul.

The United States remained reluctant throughout the 1920s to establish formal relations with the country described in Engert's memorandum. The channel for contact between the United

States and Afghanistan became the American Embassy in Paris, through which the Afghan Legation periodically renewed the request for diplomatic relations. The United States, in turn, dealt with Afghanistan through its Paris Embassy to request support for the Kellogg-Briand pact in 1928 and to inform Afghanistan of joint efforts to resolve the conflict in Manchuria in 1929. During the period, the first, tentative commercial contacts began to develop between the United States and Afghanistan. In 1930-31 an American firm sold 68 trucks to the Afghan Government for \$121,000.

In 1930 Wallace Smith Murray, Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs in the Department of State, wrote to Congressman A.J. Sabath of Illinois explaining that the United States still felt unable to recognize Afghanistan. He cited the lack of capitulatory rights or other safeguards for the protection of foreigners under the local law. He added that Afghanistan had long been an arena of struggle between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union for control of the gateway to India, and he felt that while that struggle continued "no foreign lives in the country can be protected and no foreign interests guaranteed."

## Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

**W**hen Afghanistan renewed its request for recognition in 1934 in a June 28 letter to President Roosevelt from King Mohammed Zahir Shah, the Roosevelt Administration was prepared to reconsider the question. King Zahir's letter announced his accession and expressed his desire to strengthen political and economic relations with the United States. William Phillips, Acting Secretary of State, explained, in a letter to President Roosevelt on August 21:

Our failure to recognize the Government of Nahir Shah was due largely to the fact



that this Government was never formally notified of the abdication of Amanullah and the accession of Nahir Shah; moreover, we have been naturally conservative on the subject of establishing relations with Afghanistan owing to the primitive conditions of the country, the lack of capitulatory or other guarantees for the safety of foreigners, and the absence of any important American interests.

Phillips added, however, that peace and progress seemed to have been established in Afghanistan, the young king was popular, his two uncles prudent, and recognition by the United States was genuinely sought. "Since the present regime appears to be a stable one, I can see no reason why we should withhold recognition." Roosevelt agreed, and in an August 21 letter to King Zahir he extended U.S. recognition:

I cordially reciprocate the sentiments which you express, and, in extending recognition to Your Majesty's Government, take this opportunity of assuring you of my hope that friendly relations will always exist between the United States and Afghanistan.

When U.S. Ambassador Jesse Straus conveyed President Roosevelt's letter concerning recognition to Shah Wali in Paris, the Afghan Minister expressed the hope that these relations might be established on a permanent basis as soon as possible and that to that end a treaty of friendship should be concluded. The United States countered this request with an offer of a less formal treaty of friendship, like that which had been signed with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1933. Such an agreement had laid the basis for diplomatic and consular representation but had not provided for an exchange of representatives. Afghanistan preferred full diplomatic relations but was prepared to sign the agreement proposed by the United States except for a clause calling for "most-favored-nation" treatment with respect to commerce. Afghanistan had not signed such an agreement with any other nation and did not feel able to establish a different precedent. Negotiations followed, and Ambassador Straus and Ali Mohammed Khan, Afghan Minister in London, signed a treaty of friendship in Paris on March 26, 1936,

that was limited largely to diplomatic practice and protection of citizens.

Although this treaty did not involve a formal exchange of diplomatic representation, William H. Hornibrook, U.S. Minister to Iran, was given a concurrent appointment as Minister to Afghanistan. Hornibrook continued to reside in Tehran. He resigned in March 1936 and was not replaced as Minister in Tehran until Louis G. Dreyfus, Jr., was assigned responsibility for Afghanistan as well as Iran in February 1940.

During the negotiations for the treaty of friendship, Afghanistan sought to interest the United States in establishing a permanent legation in Afghanistan by offering an exclusive concession to develop potential oil resources. The Afghan Foreign Minister told Hornibrook during a visit to Kabul in May 1935 that "for obvious reasons" Afghanistan could not give the concession to either the United Kingdom or the Soviet Union, but that those powers would not favor giving it to the Germans or the Japanese. Afghanistan, therefore, looked to the United States for oil development, and a year later granted the Inland Oil Exploration Company a 75-year concession. The government hoped that the concession would draw a sizable number of Americans to Afghanistan and lead to the establishment of an American Legation in Kabul. Inland Oil began exploration in 1937, but in June 1938 the company cancelled the concession, calling the project unfeasible in light of the worsening international situation.

World War II altered Afghanistan's role in world affairs. German influence increased throughout the 1930s as technicians and capital moved into the country to help develop the economy. German intelligence activities in Afghanistan grew apace, and by the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 serious concern had developed in London and Moscow about German interests in Afghanistan even though Afghanistan maintained its neutrality. The United States began to share this concern after



(State Department photo)

Charge d'Affaires Charles W. Thayer opened the U.S. Legation in Afghanistan in June 1942.

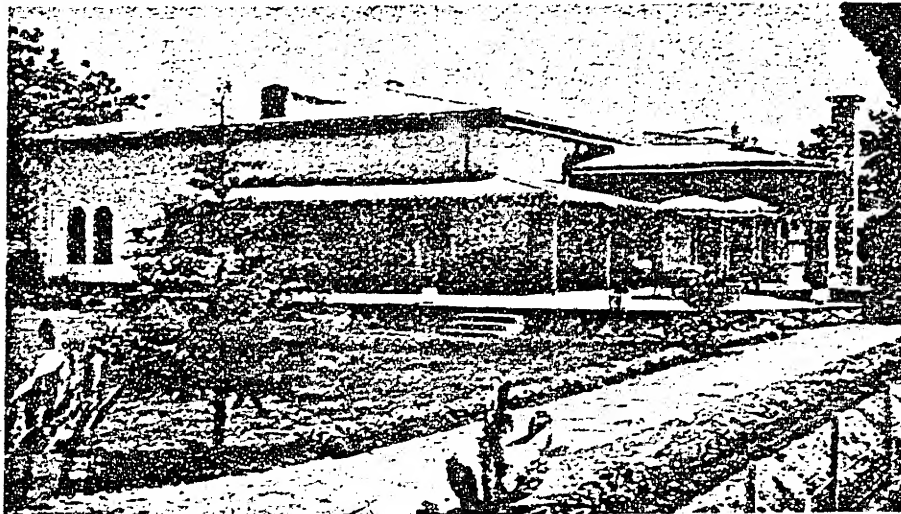
the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the war in December 1941, and global strategic considerations took on a new importance in Washington. The German drive into the Caucasus in 1942 threatened Allied communications with the Soviet Union and redoubled the strategic significance of Afghanistan. It remained neutral, but its neutrality was conditioned by traditional antipathy to major Allied powers—the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union—as well as recent German economic influence. The United States found it timely and important to act upon the longstanding invitation to open a legation in Kabul.

Negotiations for the establishment of a legation were quickly concluded in

# *Awāz-e Afghanistan*



(Thayer, Library of Congress)



The U.S. Embassy residence in Kabul, a one-story structure on about 3 acres of land, has housed all of the U.S. Ambassadors to Afghanistan. (State Department photo)

In February 1943, Abdul Hussein Aziz became the first Afghan Minister to the United States.

1942, and Charles W. Thayer, who was then serving in the Soviet Union, was designated Third Secretary of Legation and ordered to proceed to Kabul and open the post. After an adventurous overland trip from Iran, Thayer arrived in Kabul at the end of May and received a warm reception from the Afghan Government. Thayer, who noted in his diary that he felt he was leaving civilization when he left Iran, found Afghanistan a pleasant surprise. The country was beautiful, the people friendly, and the government anxious to establish good relations with the United States. Thayer was received by the Foreign Minister and opened the legation in Kabul on June 6, 1942. On June 11, he had an interview with Prime Minister Muhammed Hashim, who

looked beyond the war to the possibility of American assistance to help develop Afghanistan. In July, Cornelius Engert, who had been appointed Minister to Afghanistan on May 2, joined Thayer in Kabul and the legation was fully staffed.

In the United States, the diplomatic representatives of Turkey handled the interests of Afghanistan after 1930. On July 9, 1942, Mohammed Omar Khan was recognized as Honorary Consul of Afghanistan at New York. In September 1942 the Afghan Government conveyed to Minister Engert a desire to open a legation in Washington. The Department of State responded favorably, and Afghanistan appointed Abdul Hussein Aziz Minister to the United States in February 1943. On June 4, 1943, Aziz presented his credentials to President Roosevelt.

In 1948 the process of establishing diplomatic representation was completed with the upgrading of the legations to embassies. On June 5 Ely C. Palmer, who had been in Kabul since 1945, was appointed first U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. Afghanistan, in turn, indicated the importance it attached to relations with the United States by appointing Mohammed Naim Khan, first cousin of the King, as Ambassador to the United States.



(State Department photo)

On June 5, 1948, Ely E. Palmer was appointed the first U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan.

## Post-War Relations

The United States emerged from the Second World War in a position to exert considerable influence in South Asia. The United Kingdom was at the point of withdrawing from the subcontinent, and the Soviet Union was busy rebuilding its economy and consolidating its new empire in Eastern Europe. Afghanistan looked to the United States after the war for development aid and technical assistance to replace the technicians and capital which Germany had begun to provide before the war. The United States, however, in assuming its new global responsibilities, confronted enormous demands upon American assistance from the war-torn countries of Western Europe and Asia. Until these more pressing demands were met, little could be spared for Afghanistan, which had suffered no such wounds. The United States did become, during and after the war, the major market for karakul skins, which, along with fresh and dried fruit, constituted the leading export items for Afghanistan. Before karakul skins declined in fashion later in the 1950s, Afghanistan had built up a \$20 million credit in the United States.

## The Helmand Valley Project

The most significant American contribution to development in Afghanistan during the years immediately following the war began as a private venture. In late 1945 negotiations opened between the Afghan Government and Morrison-Knudsen, an engineering firm based in Boise, Idaho, for the construction of a comprehensive system of canals, dams, reservoirs, and power plants in the Helmand River Valley of southern Afghanistan. The Helmand River is the longest in Afghanistan, and the object of the project was to control its flow, tap its energy, and convert the lower Helmand Valley into the granary it had been centuries before. The negotiation between Morrison-Knudsen and the Afghan

Government led to the establishment of Morrison-Knudsen Afghanistan Incorporated, with headquarters in San Francisco. Morrison-Knudsen engineers surveyed the Helmand Valley and estimated that the river could be tamed and the desert brought into bloom with the construction of two dams and an extensive canal system, at a total estimated cost of \$63.7 million. On this optimistic assumption the project was begun.

Once undertaken, the Helmand Valley project proved difficult, costly, and disappointing. Despite the good intentions of all involved and the professional skill of the American engineers, in the end the project seriously tarnished the U.S. reputation for efficiency and technical expertise. The project also became, over the years, a nagging irritant and an embarrassment in relations between the United States and Afghanistan.

The project was plagued from the start by problems and dubious assumptions, including the idea that nomads in the area could be induced to settle on and farm the land reclaimed by irrigation. Among the other problems were local resistance to the construction of dams and canals, inadequate preliminary surveys, bureaucratic obstacles in Kabul, and the fact that all equipment involved in the project had to be shipped from the United States. Despite the attempts to cut expenses, costs mounted above estimates, and the credit surplus accumulated through the sale of karakul skins was used quickly.

## Beginning of U.S. Aid

The problems and costs engendered by the Helmand Valley project caused the Afghan Government to turn to the U.S. Government for support. In response to a request for more than \$100 million for the completion of Helmand Valley and other projects, the Export-Import Bank approved a \$21 million

President Truman with Prime Minister Shah Mahmud during the latter's visit to the United States in 1951. With them is Charge d'Affaires Aziz.

loan in November 1949. In 1952 another loan of \$18.5 million was negotiated to enable Morrison-Knudsen to complete work on the project. In 1951 the Boghra canal system was completed, and at the request of the Afghan Government, Morrison-Knudsen took over the engineering obligations previously assumed by the government. By April 1953 the 145-foot-high Arghandab Dam and the 300-foot-high Kajaki Dam were completed. Technical problems, however, limited the effectiveness of the project which irrigated only 170,000 acres, most of which were already being farmed.

The Helmand Valley project began the involvement of the U.S. Government in the development program in Afghanistan. On February 9, 1951, the United States and Afghanistan signed their first Point IV technical assistance agreement, and in December 1952 Technical Cooperation Administration advisers began to arrive to work on the Helmand Valley project. The technical cooperation program agreement signed on June 30, 1953, became a model for similar agreements renewed annually for the next 24 years. Loans were extended to Afghanistan in 1953 for the purchase of American wheat, and, under the guidance of the International Cooperation Administration, the U.S. foreign aid program in Afghanistan was broadened to include education and transportation projects as well as agricultural and technical assistance. By 1955 the level of U.S. aid to Afghanistan was more than double that of the next largest contributor, the Soviet Union. By that point, however, the level of Soviet aid was increasing rapidly, and a serious problem had developed to color relations between the United States and Afghanistan.



(UPI photo; Truman Library)



# پاکستان / Afghanistan



The fabled Khyber Pass links Afghanistan with Pakistan and has been the subject of numerous authors such as Rudyard Kipling and James Michener.

## The Pakistan Factor

**T**he establishment of the nation of Pakistan in 1947 had a major impact upon relations between the United States and Afghanistan. From the outset relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan were troubled. Pakistan inherited, as its border with Afghanistan, the frontier established in 1893 by Sir Mortimer Durand on behalf of British India. Afghanistan had accepted the Durand line in 1893 under British pressure, but Afghan Governments thereafter had reserved an irredentist claim to the Pushtu-speaking Pathan tribal areas which lay to the east of the Durand line. The creation in 1947 of what the Afghans viewed as the artificial state of Pakistan threw into sharp relief the Afghan claims to the Pathan tribal areas in Pakistan. Afghanistan felt that the Pushtu-speaking homelands should be united

with the Afghan state, or, that at a minimum, they should be granted independence as the separate state of "Pushtunistan."

The Government of Pakistan did not look favorably upon the proposals for territorial changes. The conditions involved in the establishment of Pakistan made such changes difficult, and the Karachi government rejected pressure from Afghanistan on an issue which it felt had been settled in 1893. The Government of Pakistan dealt with the Pathan tribes living in the country as the British had—granting them a good deal of local autonomy and providing subsidies. Afghanistan countered by agitating through local tribal leaders, such as the Fakir of Ipi, for the establishment of a separate Pushtu state.

The tenor of relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as a result of

the Pushtunistan issue, was set in 1947 when Afghanistan cast the lone vote in the United Nations against the admission of Pakistan. The two countries exchanged ambassadors in 1948 but continued a propaganda war on the Pushtunistan issue. In 1950 the first significant breach in relations occurred when Pakistan closed its border to "blockade" Afghanistan in response to Afghan incursions across the Durand line. The blockade represented a serious threat to landlocked Afghanistan which depended at that point upon transit through Pakistan for its commerce.

The United States saw the Pushtunistan dispute as potentially disruptive to the stability of the area and, without pronouncing on the merits of the issue, attempted on several occasions to mediate in the dispute. U.S. efforts to mediate failed, as did mediation efforts of Muslim states such as Egypt, Turkey, and Iran.

## Prime Minister Daoud

**P** rime Minister Daoud, who shaped Afghanistan's course for 15 of the past 30 years, came to power in 1953 as a result of a bloodless palace revolt. A cousin of King Zahir, Daoud came to office determined to reorient some of Afghanistan's policies and to energize others. He was concerned about the sluggishness of the Helmand Valley project, anxious to increase the pace of social and economic reform in Afghanistan, and determined to push harder on the Pushtunistan issue. His concern about the Helmand Valley project led him to replace some of the Afghan administrators responsible for the project and to work with the American Embassy to intensify the effort to improve the project. His desire for economic reform and for the modernization of Afghanistan's antiquated armed forces also led him to turn to the United States for support.

The U.S. response to Daoud's requests for support on the Pushtunistan issue was to continue to advise him to try to work the matter out amicably with Pakistan. American officials suggested that it probably would prove easier to reach agreement if the two countries were allied together in a system of regional security. Vice President Nixon visited Afghanistan December 4-6, 1953, and attempted to persuade the Daoud government of the wisdom of alliance with Pakistan and Iran. He found, however, the Afghan Government anxious to persuade the United States that the Pushtunistan dispute prevented Afghanistan from agreement with Pakistan.

## Collective Security in South Asia

**B** y 1953 the Pushtunistan dispute began to be overlaid by "cold war" pressures upon the South Asia area. The United States, guided by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, pushed for the

development of a "northern tier" collective security bulwark against Soviet expansion into the area. In 1954 the bulwark began to take shape as Turkey and Pakistan signed a pact of mutual defense. Afghanistan looked on with concern as the United States and Pakistan signed a mutual security agreement in 1954 which provided for extensive military aid to Pakistan. In 1955 the Baghdad pact pulled together Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and, for a time, Iraq in the system of regional security which Dulles had worked to create. In Afghanistan Prime Minister Daoud, who had declined to participate in the collective security agreement, denounced the Baghdad pact.

## Afghanistan Turns to the U.S.S.R.

**A** fghanistan responded to the U.S.-Pakistan mutual security agreement in 1954 by requesting similar military aid to develop Afghan armed forces. Afghanistan looked upon the modern weapons being provided to Pakistan as a threat to India or Afghanistan rather than the Soviet Union. The United States, in turn, felt that unless Afghanistan could turn away from its traditional neutrality and join a system of regional security, Washington could not offend Pakistan and risk regional stability by providing arms to Afghanistan. Daoud turned, therefore, to Moscow. In August 1956 Afghanistan negotiated an agreement with the Soviet Union for the provision of \$25 million in modern arms. In addition, the Soviet Union agreed to assist in the construction or expansion of three military airfields in Afghanistan. With Soviet arms came Soviet military advisers and dependence upon the Soviet Union for spare parts, new technology, and additional military aid. The 1956 arms agreement began the longstanding Soviet influence over the Afghan military establishment which has not been relinquished.

The Soviet Union's economic relationship with Afghanistan also expanded during this time. In July 1950, Afghanistan had negotiated a 4-year barter-agreement with the Soviet Union

to offset the border closing by Pakistan. By the terms of the agreement, the Soviet Union agreed to export petroleum products, cotton cloth, sugar, and other commodities to Afghanistan in return for Afghan wool and raw cotton. The Soviet Union also offered to construct gasoline storage facilities and to take over oil exploration in northern Afghanistan from a Swedish company. By 1952 Afghan-Soviet trade had doubled, and the reopening of the Pakistan border to normal commerce did not reverse the pattern.

Riots in Afghanistan and Pakistan, growing out of the Pushtunistan issue, closed the border again for 5 months during 1955. Afghanistan asked the United States for assistance to build a new transit route through Iran to a Persian Gulf port to replace the vulnerable connection through Pakistan. The United States and Iran replied that construction of such a route would be impractical and prohibitively expensive. Daoud then asked the Soviet Union to renew the 1950 transit agreement and on June 21, 1955, a 5-year extension of the agreement was signed. In December 1955 Soviet Prime Minister Bulganin and Communist Party Secretary Khrushchev stopped in Kabul as part of a highly publicized tour of South Asia. They publicly endorsed Afghanistan's position on Pushtunistan, and the Soviet Union agreed to grant a \$100 million long-term development loan to Afghanistan to be used for jointly agreed projects. At the same time, Prime Minister Daoud announced a 10-year extension of the 1931 Soviet-Afghan treaty of neutrality and nonaggression.

By 1956 Daoud was fully embarked upon his "big gamble," which involved accelerating Afghan development by accepting a heavy infusion of Soviet aid, while encouraging enough aid from the West to maintain a semblance of neutrality. The Soviet Union, at the same time, launched in Afghanistan the largest Soviet aid program outside of Eastern Europe on the presumption that such aid would establish a predominant



escorted the President's plane were Soviet-made MiG-17s, the honor guard was armed with Soviet arms and rode in Soviet trucks, and the roads along which the crowds gathered were paved by Soviet equipment.

## Expanding U.S. Assistance

In 1959 newly appointed American Ambassador Henry Byroade vigorously approached the task of upgrading the U.S. assistance program to Afghanistan. To assess the problems of the ailing Helmand Valley project, Byroade brought in American technicians familiar with similar problems in the Colombia River Basin. Under a new agreement signed between the United States and Afghanistan in February 1960, technicians from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation assisted the efforts of the Afghan Construction Unit, with financing from the International Cooperation Administration, on a

## Official U.S. Visits to Afghanistan

Vice President Richard M. Nixon was the first senior American official to pay an official visit to Afghanistan. He visited Kabul on December 5, 1953, during a 70-day, 19-nation tour of Asia and the Middle East.

Dwight D. Eisenhower was the only U.S. President to visit Afghanistan. He met informally with King Mohammed Zahir on December 9, 1959, during a 3-week, 12-nation goodwill tour.

William P. Rogers was the first Secretary of State to visit Afghanistan. He stopped there on May 25, 1969, en route from a meeting in Bangkok with the SEATO [South-East Asia Treaty Organization] Council of Ministers, and en route to a meeting of the CENTO [Central Treaty Organization] Council of Ministers in Tehran. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger paid two official visits to Afghanistan: November 1, 1974, and August 8, 1976. ■

variety of projects to improve the Helmand Valley complex. The total U.S. aid expended in Afghanistan between 1950 and 1958 was \$112.5 million. Thereafter, the level of aid increased to an average of \$22 million per year during the 1960s. To some extent, U.S. and Soviet assistance projects dovetailed in Afghanistan. The United States built the commercial airport at Qandahar, but the international airport at Kabul was constructed in part by Soviet technicians and the remainder by Americans. The network of roads built by the United States in the southern part of Afghanistan tied in with those built by the Soviet Union in the north.

The expanded U.S. aid program in Afghanistan was dealt a serious blow on September 6, 1961, when the continuing quarrel between Afghanistan and Pakistan closed the border again. On October 19 President Kennedy's special envoy, Ambassador Livingston T. Merchant, arrived in Karachi in an effort to mediate the dispute in the interest of reopening the border. Merchant traveled between Karachi and Kabul until November 7 when he abandoned the effort as hopeless. The border remained closed until after Prime Minister Daoud stepped down from office in March 1963. The border closure stalled several American construction projects in Afghanistan, such as the Kabul-Qandahar road, as American heavy equipment remained undelivered in Pakistan ports. American wheat intended for Afghanistan rotted in warehouses in Pakistan, and several million dollars in aid material provided by the Agency for International Development also remained in Pakistan. As a consequence, Afghanistan increased its dependence upon the Soviet Union for a trade outlet and aid material. The Pakistan-Afghan border was not reopened until May 1963, and the U.S. aid program resumed. Secretary of State Dean Rusk took note of the resumption of normal diplomatic and commercial relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

## Visit of King Zahir

The expansion of U.S. economic assistance to Afghanistan was highlighted by a visit of King Zahir to the

United States in 1963. King Zahir and Queen Homaira arrived in Williamsburg, Virginia, on September 4, 1963, for the start of a 2-week visit which took them across the country. President John F. Kennedy received the King and Queen in Washington on September 5 and accorded them a reception which included an open car motorcade through Washington, a state dinner, and a fireworks display. As with the Eisenhower visit to Afghanistan, the object was to garner as much publicity as possible from the visit. In the joint communique issued as King Zahir left Washington on September 7, "President Kennedy assured His Majesty of the continuing desire of the United States to cooperate with Afghanistan in economic and technical fields." The communique noted Afghanistan's traditional policy of safeguarding its independence through nonalignment and added that "the United States for its part places great importance on Afghanistan's continued independence and national integrity."



(Albion Rowe Collection; National Archives and Records Service)

Their Majesties King Mohammed Zahir and Queen Homaira made a State visit to the United States in September 1963. The King and Queen are welcomed by President John F. Kennedy and Eunice Kennedy Shriver at White House ceremonies.







He tried to reverse the trend shortly before the *coup* by arresting leftist leaders in Kabul, but this maneuver failed. On April 30 the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was proclaimed.

The initial American reaction to the *coup* was cautious. Serious doubts developed immediately about the independence and neutrality of the new Afghan Government, but on May 7 the Department of State announced that the United States would maintain relations with the new regime. Despite some sentiment in Congress for terminating assistance to a "Communist" government under a provision of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the Jimmy Carter Administration continued American aid programs. Government officials also avoided identifying the new regime as Communist or Communist-supported.

Gradually, however, as it became evident that the Taraki government was closely aligned with the Soviet Union, U.S.-Afghan relations began to deteriorate. In Moscow on December 5, 1978, Taraki signed a 20-year treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union. The treaty established a permanent Soviet-Afghan intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation. In the circumstances, continued American influence in Afghanistan seemed very unlikely.

## Death of Ambassador Dubs

hotel room within moments of the alleged ultimatum; Ambassador Dubs was wounded in the assault and died soon after. The embassy reported to Washington that the assault was ordered and directed by Soviet advisers on the scene. The United States immediately protested the Afghan handling of the kidnapping.

The United States reassessed its relations with Afghanistan in the wake of Ambassador Dubs' death. On February 22, the White House announced that President Carter planned to severely reduce U.S. development assistance for



1979 and 1980. Throughout the spring and summer of 1979, American officials repeatedly expressed concern about the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. On August 2, Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's adviser on national security affairs, stated that the United States expected the Soviet Union to "abstain from intervention and from efforts to impose alien doctrines on deeply religious and nationally conscious peoples."

## Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

Political conditions in Afghanistan became increasingly chaotic, and reports reaching Washington in September 1979 indicated increasing Soviet military activity along the Soviet-Afghan border. During a news briefing on September 19, Department of State spokesman Hodding Carter indicated U.S. concern: "That is that the United States is opposed to any intervention in Afghanistan's internal affairs, that our concern about the security and the stability of this region in which Afghanistan falls is a matter of longstanding public position."

The remaining basis for an American relationship with the Government of Afghanistan was swept away on December 25-27, 1979, when the Soviet Union, lending purported support to an impending *coup* against the Afghan Government of Hafizullah Amin, airlifted thousands of Soviet troops into Afghanistan. In a statement issued on December 26, the Department of State urged members of the international community to condemn "such blatant military interference" in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. In a meeting with reporters on December 28, President Carter condemned the invasion as a "blatant violation" of internationally accepted rules of behavior and a "grave threat" to peace.

The Soviet invasion destroyed the last pretense of Afghan independence and established a puppet regime directly subservient to the Soviet Union. The invasion also, however, intensified the national struggle, which had begun after the Marxist *coup d'etat*, to regain the independence which had always been so highly prized by the Afghan people. The United States has great sympathy for the efforts of the Afghan people to regain their independence and supports U.N. Security Council Resolution 462, adopted January 7, 1980, which calls for "the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan." ■

*This study was prepared by Louis J. Smith of the Asian Division, Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs.*

# Afghanistan

## Background on Afghanistan

### PEOPLE

Afghanistan's ethnically and linguistically mixed population reflects its location astride historic trade and invasion routes that lead from Central Asia into the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent. Pushtun (Pathan), Tajik, Uzbek, Turkoman, Hazara, and Aimaq ethnic groups constitute the bulk of the Afghan population, with small groups of other peoples represented. The dominant ethnic group, the Pushtuns, make up about 40% of the population. Afghan Persian (Dari) and Pushtu are the principal languages, with Turkoman and Uzbeki spoken widely in the north.

Afghanistan is a Muslim country. Religion pervades all aspects of life, and religious doctrine and codes provide the principal means of controlling conduct and settling legal disputes. Except for small populations in principal cities,

most people are engaged in agriculture and are divided into clan and tribal groups, following centuries-old customs and religious practices.

### GEOGRAPHY

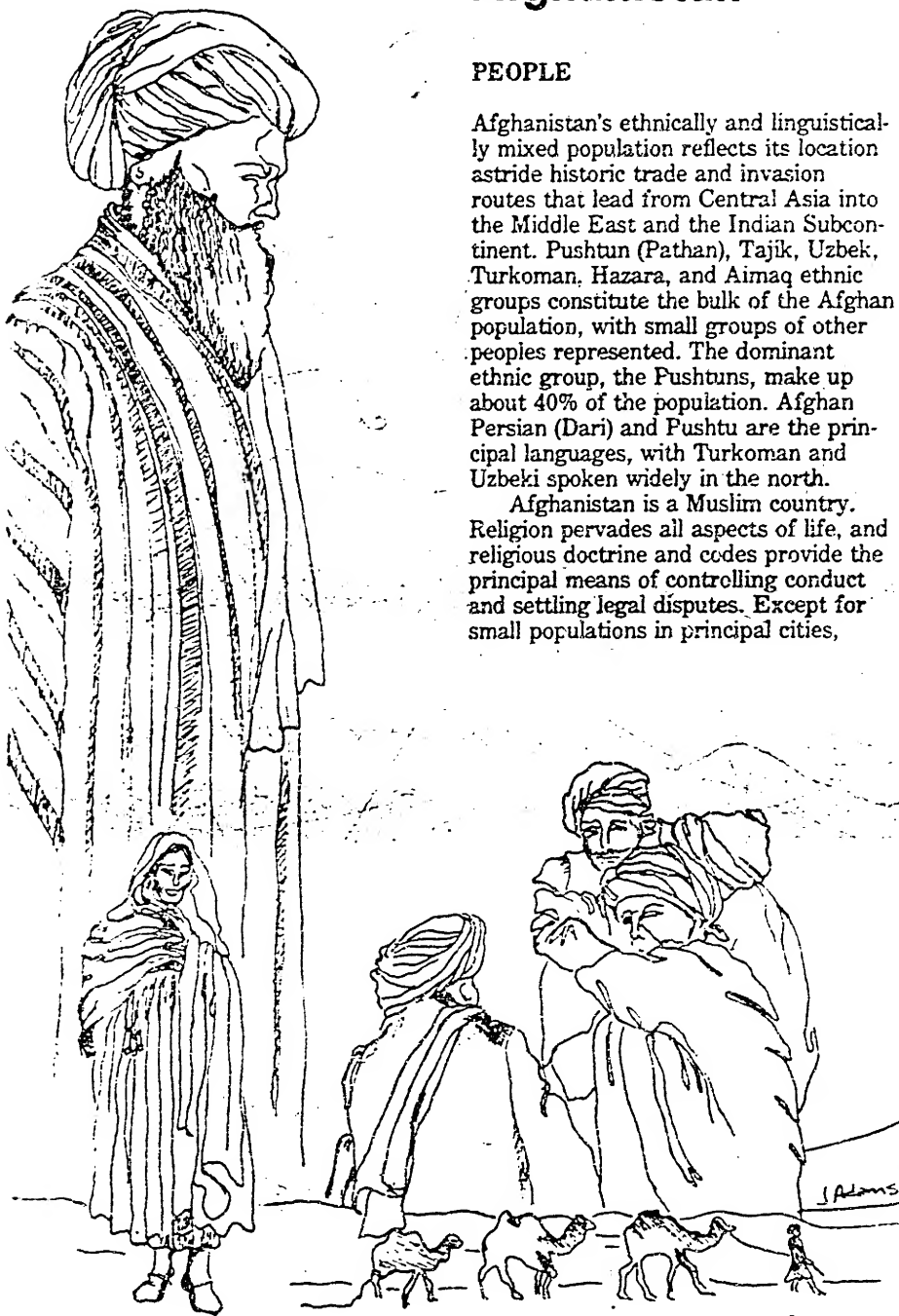
Afghanistan's climate is typical of Asia's higher regions, with cold winters and hot, dry summers. Characteristic of the climate is the range of temperature change within short periods, from season to season and from place to place. For example, a summer sunrise temperature in Kabul (at 1,829 m.—6,000 ft.) of 16°C (60°F) may reach 38°C (100°F) by noon. Kabul's mean January temperature is 0°C (32°F). Only 144 kilometers (90 mi.) away in the lowland plains of Jalalabad (549 m.—1,800 ft.), summer temperatures reach 46°C (115°F). Precipitation, most of which occurs between October and April, rarely exceeds 38 centimeters (15 in.).

The principal cities of Afghanistan are the capital, Kabul, in the east; Kandahar, in the south; Herat, near the Iranian border in the west; and Mazar-i-Sharif, near the Soviet border in the north. Other towns with modest industrial bases, such as Kunduz, Baghlan, and Pul-i-Khomri, are growing slowly.

### HISTORY

Afghanistan, often called the crossroads of Central Asia, has had a turbulent history. In 328 B.C., Alexander the Great entered the territory of present-day Afghanistan, then part of the ancient Persian Empire, and crossed the Helmand River and the Hindu Kush to capture Bactria (present-day Balkh). His invasion was followed by those of the Scythians, White Huns, and Turks. In A.D. 652, Afghanistan fell to the Arabs, who brought the new religion of Islam.

The Arabs gave way to the Persians, who controlled the area until A.D. 998, when they were conquered by the Turkic Ghaznavids. Mahmud of Ghazni (A.D. 988–1030) established his capital, Ghazni, as a great cultural center and a base for his frequent invasions of India. Following Mahmud's short-lived dynasty,



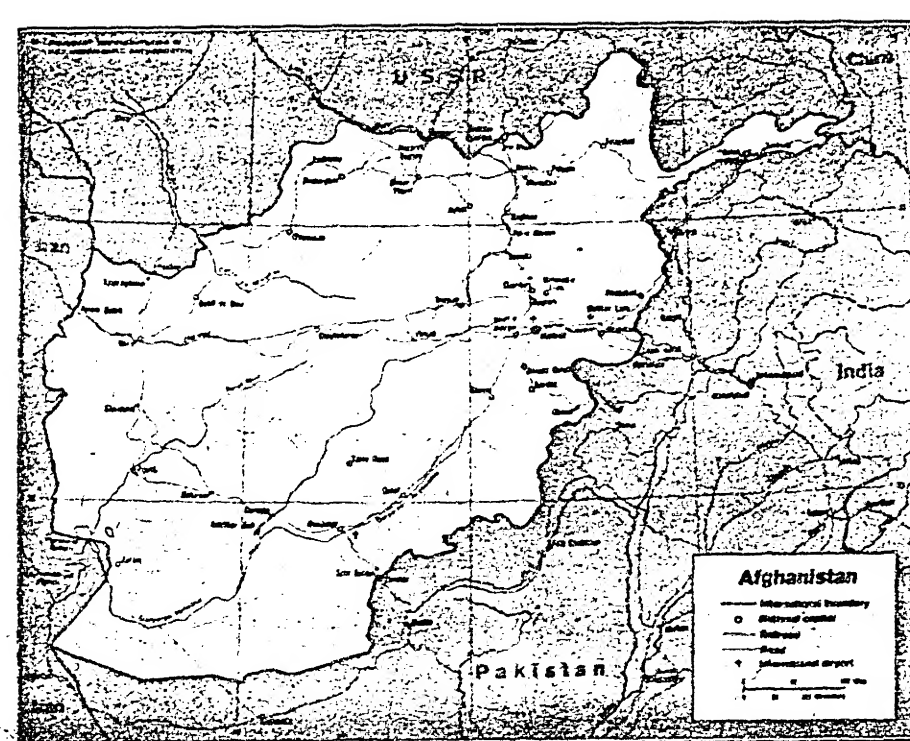
assassination, sought to terminate British control of Afghanistan's foreign affairs. This resulted in the third Anglo-Afghan war, lasting only a few months. Some initial Afghan successes persuaded the war-weary British to allow Afghanistan to conduct its own external affairs. This event is celebrated on August 19 as Afghan Independence Day, even though Afghanistan never actually was colonized by the British.

## Reform and Reaction

After the third Anglo-Afghan war, King Amanullah began making changes in his country. Moving from its traditional isolation, Afghanistan entered into diplomatic relations with the world's principal nations. In 1927, the King made an extensive tour of Europe and Ataturk's Turkey, an experience which prompted him to try to modernize Afghanistan. His modernization efforts, which included abolishing the traditional Muslim veil for women, alienated many tribal and religious leaders. This development, with the depletion of the national treasury and the deterioration of his army, made him easy prey for the *Bacha-i-Saqao* ("son of a water carrier"), a brigand who captured Kabul and declared himself king early in 1929, styling himself as "Habibullah II." With Pushtun tribal support, Prince Nadir Khan defeated the *Bacha-i-Saqao* on October 10, 1929, and was declared king, returning the crown to the Durrani tribe.

His son, Mohammad Zahir Shah, succeeded to the throne on November 8, 1933, after the assassination of Nadir Shah by a fanatical follower of the previous dynasty. Nadir Shah's brothers were Prime Ministers through 1952, and Zahir Shah's cousins, Sardar Mohammad Daoud and Sardar Mohammad Main, were Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister from 1953 until March 1963.

Using the 1964 Constitution as the vehicle, Zahir dismissed the strong-willed Daoud and introduced a program of social and political reform under a



various princes attempted to rule sections of Afghanistan, until the ravishing invasions of Ghengis Khan, whose armies destroyed many cities, including Herat, Ghazni, and Balkh, and laid waste to fertile agricultural areas.

Afghanistan was devastated again in the 14th century—this time by the invasion of Tamerlane, who incorporated Afghanistan into his vast Asian empire. In the early 16th century, Afghanistan came under the rule of Babar Shah (1483–1530), a descendant of both Ghengis and Tamerlane, and founder of India's Mogul dynasty. Babar is buried in Kabul, his favorite city.

Modern Afghanistan was founded in 1747 by Ahmad Shah Durrani, a Pushtun prince who consolidated chieftainships, petty principalities, and fragmented provinces into one country. Until the first Marxist coup in 1978, Afghanistan's rulers were from branches of the Durrani tribe and, since 1818, from that tribe's Mohammadzai clan.

## European Influence

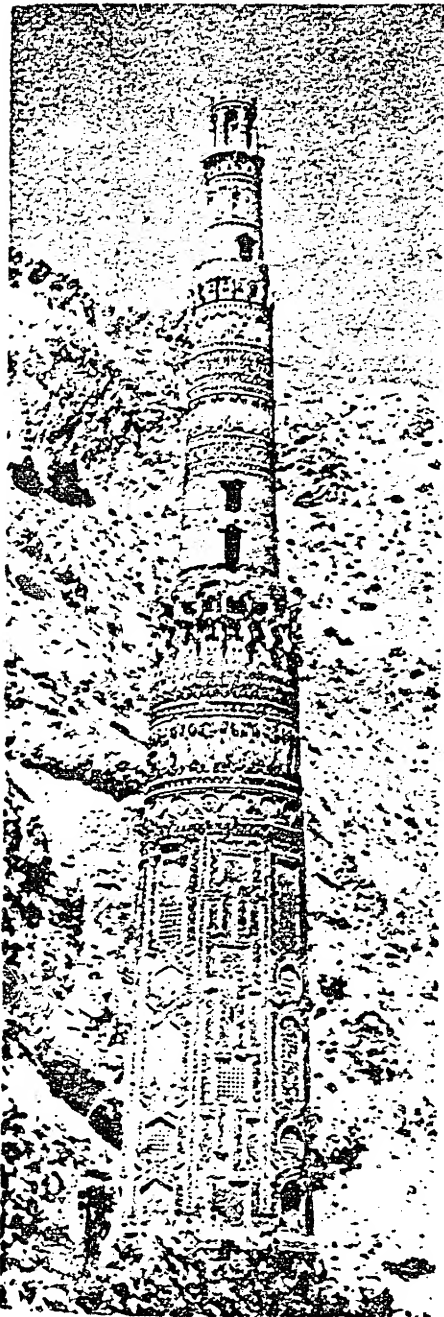
During the 19th century, as British power expanded and Russia moved into Central Asia, the history of Afghanistan was influenced significantly by European countries. British efforts to secure a stronger position to counter Russian influence in Persia (Iran) and Central Asia led to the first Anglo-Afghan war, 1838–1842.

British geopolitical concern over Russian advances in Central Asia and Afghan dealings with Russia resulted in the second Anglo-Afghan war (1878–80), which brought the Amir Abdur Rahman to the throne. This ruler agreed to British control of Afghanistan's foreign affairs.

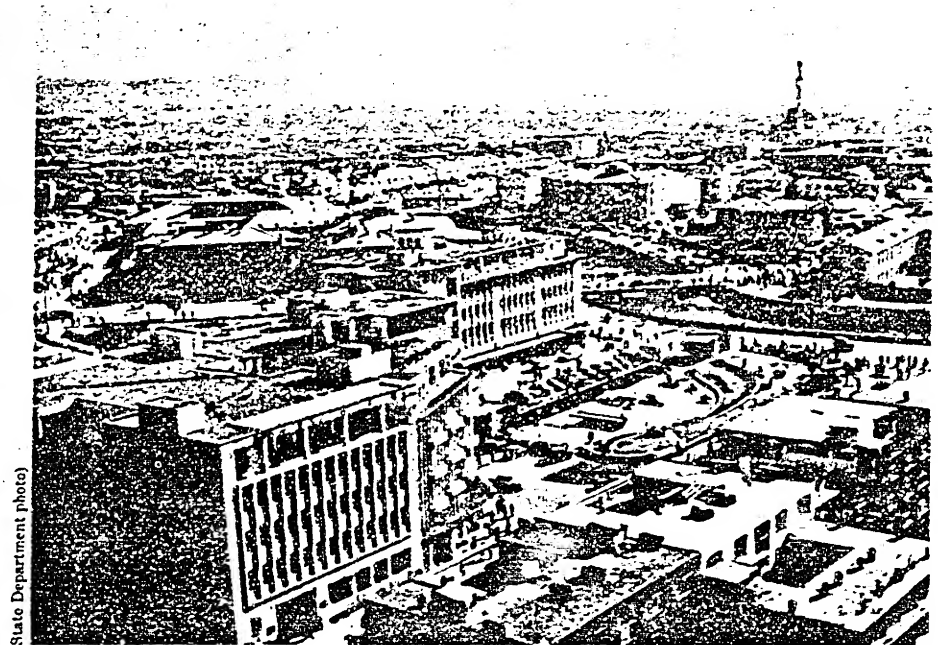
## World War I

During World War I, Afghanistan remained neutral despite German efforts to have the Afghans foment trouble along the borders of British India. Amanullah, who succeeded to the throne in 1919 following his father Habibullah's

# افغانستان Afghanistan



Minaret of Jam in the mountainous center of Afghanistan. (State Department photo)



(State Department photo)

View of the Pulikhashti Mosque and Kabul River which winds through the city of Kabul.

more liberal parliamentary rule. In practice, the "experiment in democracy" produced few lasting reforms and frequent executive-legislative deadlocks delayed or blocked vital legislation. Under this more relaxed rule, which allowed political expression but which did not provide for a legalized political party system, the country's moderate reformers were overshadowed increasingly by extremists of both the left and right. A serious 2-year drought in 1971-72 worsened the economy.

## The Daoud Republic

Amid charges of corruption and malfeasance, the monarchy was removed from power by a virtually bloodless military coup led by former Prime

Minister Mohammad Daoud on July 17, 1973. The 1963 Constitution was abrogated, and Afghanistan was declared a Republic with Daoud as its first President and Prime Minister.

## The April 1978 Coup

Although he put forward a new Constitution in 1977, Daoud's inability to carry through badly needed economic and social reforms resulted in the "Great Saur Revolution" of April 27-28, 1978, and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, with Nur Mohammad Taraki as Secretary-General of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA—a coalition of the Marxist Khalq and Parcham parties),







## Afghanistan: 2 Years of Occupation

*The following paper was written by Eliza Van Hollen of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in December 1981. It is a sequel to two reports on Soviet occupation of Afghanistan published in the Bulletin in March 1981 and October 1981.*

### Summary

Two years after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, the resistance to their military occupation and the Babrak Karmal government, which they installed, continues to mount. The extent of the area under the control of the freedom fighters (*mujahidin*) has increased steadily, despite Soviet military repression. The regime's top-priority political program to undermine popular support for the resistance movement has made little headway, and the Kabul government remains isolated and ineffectual.

The problems that have plagued the Soviets and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) from the beginning of the Soviet occupation have grown worse. Two years of harsh, often terrorizing military campaigns have multiplied the regime's enemies. The shortage of military manpower has worsened. The bitter feuding within the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) continues to erode the government's small political base. Opposition to the Soviet presence has even spread to the top levels of the party and government.

The Afghan nationalist movement has made considerable progress in consolidating its position in Afghanistan and improving its military capabilities. It

continues, however, to be highly fragmented and, therefore, lacks the advantage of centralized strategic planning and the international stature of a viable alternative national political movement. Perhaps the greatest liability growing out of the lack of cohesion in the resistance is that it encourages Moscow's calculations that it can exploit the many ethnic and tribal divisions to its ultimate advantage.

The war in Afghanistan has badly tarnished Moscow's reputation both because of the Soviets' callous disregard for the Afghan people's right to self-determination and because of the ability of the Afghan *mujahidin* to fight the Soviet occupation force to a standstill. Accumulating evidence of Soviet use of chemical warfare in Afghanistan throughout their 2-year occupation also is arousing international condemnation.

There are numerous signs that the Soviets have a more realistic appreciation of their difficulties now than they had a year ago and that they are searching for a new political formula with greater popular appeal. This perception could result in some reshuffling of officials and efforts to broaden the political base of the government. Any made-in-Moscow coalition, however, would be likely to arouse the same hostility as the current regime, as long as Soviet occupation forces remained in Afghanistan.

Even if Moscow were able to coopt non-Communist elements into a broadened government, the regime's dependence on the Soviet military presence would quickly vitiate any political gains. Indeed, the recent introduction of more Soviet troops into Afghanistan, while not a massive reinforcement, underscores Moscow's continuing commitment to a military solution.

Moscow and Kabul agreed in August, after considerable tactical maneuvering, to an active role for the United Nations in seeking a political settlement

A Soviet BMD armored personnel carrier with Soviet troops patrols the streets of downtown Kabul after the Soviet invasion.

(USICA photo)

of the Afghan problem. There is no indication, however, that the Soviets or their Afghan surrogates are prepared to yield on key substantive issues. The overwhelming international consensus demanding withdrawal of "the foreign troops" from Afghanistan was reaffirmed by a 116 to 23 vote in the U.N. General Assembly this fall. This margin represents an increase of four affirmative votes over the tally in November 1980 and of seven votes over the original ballot in January 1980.

The most recent U.N. vote demonstrates that, contrary to evident Soviet expectations, the international community is not allowing the Afghanistan issue to fade from view. Likewise, the ever-increasing refugee population in Pakistan—it has doubled since last December to a total of 2.5 million—and the continuing stream of defections from the Afghan Government and military serve to keep attention focused on this troubled land.

Moscow is willing to pay the price of international censure and apparently anticipates that a policy based on attrition and force eventually will achieve its objectives. Historical experience with Soviet aggression argues against hopes for a negotiated solution, but the tenacity of the Afghan resistance and the persistence of international protest represent unprecedented historical circumstances that clearly have upset Soviet calculations. In these circumstances, the Soviets may yet find that their long-term political interests are better served by regional stability through the restoration of Afghan independence and nonalignment.

### Regime's Authority Shrinking

According to a former planning director in the Prime Minister's office, who defected to Pakistan in August 1981, 90% of Afghanistan's districts are under resistance control. The ex-official had attended a secret conference in Kabul in June at which provincial governors had given gloomy assessments of the situation in their respective jurisdictions. While 90% may be an exaggeration, the erosion of government authority has been corroborated by foreign journalists who traveled with the *mujahidin* in the spring and summer of 1981. They describe being able to move freely, even in the daytime, in

areas where a year earlier the presence of government security forces had necessitated extreme caution.

The much publicized, unsuccessful efforts of Soviet/Afghan troops to dislodge the *mujahidin* from strongholds in the Panjsher Valley (northeast of Kabul) and from the Paghman area (only 12 miles from the capital) illustrate the immense difficulties confronting the Soviets as they try to wrest strategic areas from the resistance.

Furthermore, the *mujahidin* have demonstrated during 1981 an impressive capability to bring the war to the major cities, where control is of paramount importance to the Babrak regime. The freedom fighters virtually held Qandahar for much of the summer and early fall; they have kept Herat in periodic turmoil; even in Kabul nightly gun battles, frequent assassinations, and intensifying attacks on government and Soviet installations attest to a significant *mujahidin* presence despite tight security and repeated house-to-house searches.

In the many areas of the country where the liberation movement exercises

control, resistance leaders have set up their own administration, making laws, collecting taxes, dispensing justice, and providing services. Even in areas under nominal government authority (maintained by a military presence), the resistance often runs parallel governments. In the cities of Qandahar and Herat, for example, the *mujahidin* dictate curfew hours, establish price controls, and levy taxes. In almost all areas the dividing line between government and resistance authority will be even more clearly drawn at the edge of an important town, with the *mujahidin* controlling traffic, manning roadblocks, and levying duties just beyond this line. This is the situation that prevails just outside of Kabul. Local civilian and military authorities often buy a tenuous peace from the freedom fighters by supplying weapons and ammunition to them.

The *mujahidin* are also engaged in an ongoing battle with the regime for control over the major roads. They conduct ambushes of supply convoys on all the important routes, including the vital links between the Soviet border and



Afghan resistance fighters survey the mountainous terrain, monitoring Soviet and Afghan forces air and ground movements.

(U.S. Government photo)

# Kabul Afghanistan

Kabul. Recently, in an effort to protect the supply network, government forces have begun to clear away buildings and trees, which afford protective cover to the *mujahidin*, in a wide swath along the roads running north and south from Kabul.

## DRA/Soviet Offensive to Counter the Resistance

**Political Policy.** From the early days of the Babrak regime and the Soviet occupation, the authorities have relentlessly pursued the related political and military goals of establishing the legitimacy of the Babrak government and defeating the nationalist military forces. Over the long run, the political/propaganda war is as important as military action and could ultimately be the decisive contest. If the population at large can be persuaded to drop its support for the resistance and accept a government that has Moscow's blessing, the *mujahidin* will become isolated and vulnerable. That the Soviets are aware of the importance of the political struggle is clear from the enormous effort they have undertaken to try to establish the legitimacy of the current regime and to convince the population of the regime's good faith with respect to such key issues as Islam, nationalities policy, amnesty for refugees, and a revised land reform program.

The cornerstone of the political policy has been the formation of a National Fatherland Front (NFF), an umbrella organization composed initially of 12 institutions representing such elements of the population as trade unions, agricultural cooperatives, youth, women, writers, journalists, artists, scholars and religious leaders, and the tribes. Many of the founding organizations were either formed or held their first national meeting after a December 27, 1980, conference which launched the campaign to establish the NFF.

The founding congress of the front was finally held on June 15 after several postponements. It was portrayed as a contemporary version of a *Loya Jirga*—a traditional assembly of Afghanistan's tribal leaders convoked to make historic decisions. As such, it was intended to legitimize the Babrak regime. Indeed, in his "fundamental statement" to the NFF

congress, Karmal claimed that the formation of the NFF was evidence of: "the normalization of the situation" in Afghanistan; the unified support of all "patriotic forces" for PDPA principles; the "fraternity" of all of Afghanistan's social classes and ethnic groups; and the ability of the regime to solve difficult problems and create a new society.

A massive political and propaganda effort was devoted to creating the NFF and its constituent members, and the founding congress was portrayed as a momentous historic occasion. When the congress was finally held, however, it was generally recognized to be a sham. Relatively little has been heard of it since. Indeed, it was not until over 4 months later that an NFF committee was formed for Kabul Province.

Another important political move during 1981 was the creation of a Ministry of Nationalities and Tribal Affairs to replace the former Ministry of Border and Tribal Affairs. The new ministry institutionalizes the regime's nationalities policy to promote local language and culture. Like its Soviet model, this policy is designed to appeal to a sense of ethnic uniqueness. It is, in effect, a policy of divide and rule that could become an effective weapon for the Soviets in a country where minority ethnic groups have traditionally not been given due recognition.

The regime reintroduced land reform in August but revised the regulations to offer exemption from land confiscation in return for support for the Babrak regime. The exemptions are skewed to appeal to such key groups as the clergy, military officers, and tribal leaders. The incentives probably will have little impact as they are meaningless in the many areas where the government is too weak to impose a land reform program.

In September, the Presidium of the Revolutionary Council approved a new law on local organs of state power and administration and a new Council of Ministers law, which will strengthen and expand the role of the state in Afghan society. The "local organs" measure embodies the Soviet principle of "democratic centralism" in a system of local councils, which are portrayed as traditional *jirgas*. The regime claims the new law will reinforce democracy, but, in effect, it strengthens party control. Only

the PDPA and PDPA auxiliary organizations can nominate candidates for election to the local councils.

There is no indication that these political measures have attracted support for the government. But the Soviets take a long-range view; many of these actions demonstrate that Moscow is counting on long-term benefits from the Sovietization of the Afghan Government and party machinery.

**Defense Policy.** The Soviets are clearly under pressure to produce more immediate results from their military campaigns. During the first half of 1981, political strategy seemed to have the higher priority, but by midsummer it became clear that the deteriorating security situation once again had become the paramount concern.

In August, the Afghan regime established new defense councils at the national, provincial, and district levels to concentrate all aspects of defense under strict party control. Announcing the formation of the new councils at a meeting

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*The lack of recruits is essentially a political problem and highlights the absence of government authority throughout most of the country.*

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of armed forces party activists, Babrak Karmal spoke of "troublesome and difficult conditions" and "increasing armed actions by counterrevolutionary elements." He said it was imperative for all forces to go on the offensive.

New defense councils, however, will not solve the overriding military problem—the critical shortage of manpower for the Afghan Army, which stands at about 30,000 out of a normal strength of about 100,000. The lack of recruits is essentially a political problem and highlights the absence of government authority throughout most of the country.

Perhaps the Soviets' most serious miscalculation when they invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 was a belief that they could reverse the already far-advanced disintegration of the Afghan armed forces. This process has not only continued but has accelerated. Various counteracting measures—for example, the January 1981 conscription law, which lowered the draft age and extended the obligatory tour of duty, and the September mobilization of all reservists up to age 35—have not helped.

Because of Afghanistan's mandatory service laws, the mobilization in September covered virtually the entire male population in the stipulated age bracket. The announcement provoked antigovernment demonstrations among students; eligible males took off for the hills, emptying government and business offices. The regime immediately began to back-track and announced a number of exemptions. It also quickly revised downward from 450,000 to 85,000 its estimates of eligible reservists. As the year ends, the results of the callup are unlikely to produce more than 15,000–20,000 able-bodied men, many of whom will desert as soon as possible. As it has throughout the past 2 years, the government must rely on press gangs to enforce the directive.

The September callup was obviously prompted by the scheduled discharge in December of perhaps half of the army's enlisted men. The government would prefer not to discharge any of those currently serving. It needs the men, but it also does not want to make available to the *mujahidin* such a large pool of trained soldiers. Nevertheless, it went ahead with the discharge announcement on December 4, probably because it feared an explosive reaction to a further extension of service. Every effort, however, is being made to insure that those who are officially discharged actually remain in the army or related security services.

The ineffectiveness of the Afghan Army has forced the Soviets to assume the lion's share of the burden of pacification. The events of 1981 suggest, however, that Soviet military operations in Afghanistan have been ineffective. They failed to dislodge the *mujahidin* from their strongholds and have been unable to organize a successful defense against *mujahidin* ambush operations even on

the main road from the Soviet border to Kabul.

There are numerous signs that the Soviets are concerned about the progress of the war. They have recently introduced additional troops into the country and, while the number—about 5,000—is not large, it suggests that the Soviets think their forces are spread too thin to counteract the growing resistance. A high-level Soviet military delegation led by Deputy Defense Minister Sokolov has, as of mid-December, been in Kabul for a protracted stay. This visit, combined with a recent intensification of offensive operations, indicates that Soviet military authorities in Afghanistan are currently under pressure to produce results.

There is growing concern that this pressure will lead to an increased use of chemical warfare by the Soviets. Evidence of the use of lethal and casualty-producing chemical agents against the *mujahidin* is mounting. The most frequent application of these toxic agents is against *mujahidin* bases inside mountain caves, which are otherwise inaccessible to conventional aircraft or helicopter attack.

The failure of Soviet forces to achieve their objectives in Afghanistan can be explained by factors that are inherent in a confrontation between a large bureaucratic military machine in a foreign land and small mobile guerrilla units operating on their home ground. Poor Soviet morale also contributes to the lack of Soviet success as does the collusion between Afghan army personnel and the *mujahidin*.

### The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan: A House Divided

For the Soviets, the most frustrating aspect of their failures in Afghanistan must be their continuing inability to achieve a truce between the two principal factions of the ruling party, the Khalqis and Parchamis. The deep-seated feud, which dates from the early days of the party in the late 1960s, has continued to rage throughout the past year. The numerically superior Khalqis are struggling to regain some of the power they lost when the Soviets installed Babrak's Parchamis at the time of the invasion. The Parchamis would like a thorough purge of the Khalqis, but the Soviets, mindful of

Khalq strength in the military forces, continue to seek a reconciliation and have insisted on maintaining leading Khalqis in top positions.

The feuding was particularly intense during the weeks preceding the sixth plenum of the PDPA in June and a concurrent meeting of the Revolutionary Council to effect party and government organizational changes. The most important task was to name a prime minister, a job previously held by Babrak in addition to his duties as President and General Secretary of the PDPA. The Soviets may have hoped to use this change to achieve a better Khalq-Parcham balance; certainly the Khalqis lobbied hard to improve their position. Compromise, however, proved elusive. In the end the Soviets stuck by the Parchamis. The leading Parcham contender, Sultan Ali Keshmand, became prime minister and the concurrent expansion of various party and government bodies also gave additional advantages to the Parcham faction.

The reorganization in June further exacerbated the split and led to renewed indications that the Khalqis, in their anger at the Soviets and the Parchamis, are cooperating with the *mujahidin*. In Babrak's mid-August speech to armed forces party activists, he lashed out at party factionalism, which he said was hindering efforts to improve military effectiveness.

Reports of a reactivated power struggle within the PDPA leadership in late November and early December were fueled by the prolonged absence from Kabul of Prime Minister Keshmand, who spent almost 2 months in Moscow following an official visit to Bulgaria. Keshmand's name was not mentioned in the Afghan media during his absence. His return to Kabul on December 13 was a week too late to attend the seventh party plenum on December 7. The proceedings of this plenum have not been published, but the meeting is believed to have been preoccupied with the issue of party disunity and indiscipline.

The most disruptive factor on the political scene continues to be the Khalq effort to stage a comeback, but there are also periodic reports of splits within the Parcham faction that pit Keshmand



# استقلال افغانستان

against Babrak. In spite of speculation that the Soviets are seeking an alternative to Babrak, however, their public support of him as of mid-December does not suggest that they are prepared to abandon him. On December 15, Babrak left Kabul to pay a state visit to Bulgaria. He stopped in Moscow en route to present Brezhnev with the Afghan Sun of Freedom Order in connection with the Soviet leader's 75th birthday.

Internecine fighting is not likely to abate. In view of the deteriorating security situation and the obvious failure of party and government policies, it is not surprising that the beleaguered leadership is wracked by mutual recriminations. It is becoming apparent that many top leaders want the Soviets to leave and are trying to distance themselves from the odious symbol of close association with the Soviet occupation.

In late 1981, the Afghan regime appears to be making a renewed effort to draw prominent members of former governments into participation in a more broadly based government. Although they may succeed with one or two figures who may have become dissatisfied with exile life, this approach is not likely to be very productive.

There are also reports of efforts to form a new party that would subsume the Khalq-Parcham problem. The Parchamis themselves have sponsored a major party recruitment drive throughout the year to reduce Khalq influence within the PDPA by significantly enlarging and broadening its membership. A high party official claimed in February 1981 that party membership had increased by 25% in the preceding 6 months. Babrak told the fifth party plenum in March that the character of the party was changing and that 25-30% of the new members were workers and farmers. At the sixth party plenum in June, Karmal stated that "thousands of the best representatives of workers, peasants, craftsmen, employees, intelligentsia, students, and other social strata have been admitted to the party probationary membership."

Given the hazards associated with party membership (members are automatic targets for the *mujahidin* assassins), the recruitment drive is likely to

(U.S. Government photo)



*Mujahidin camp in Afghanistan; in the background are captured Afghan army trucks.*

have been less successful than Babrak claims. The lack of published, official figures on the size of the party suggests that it remains small.

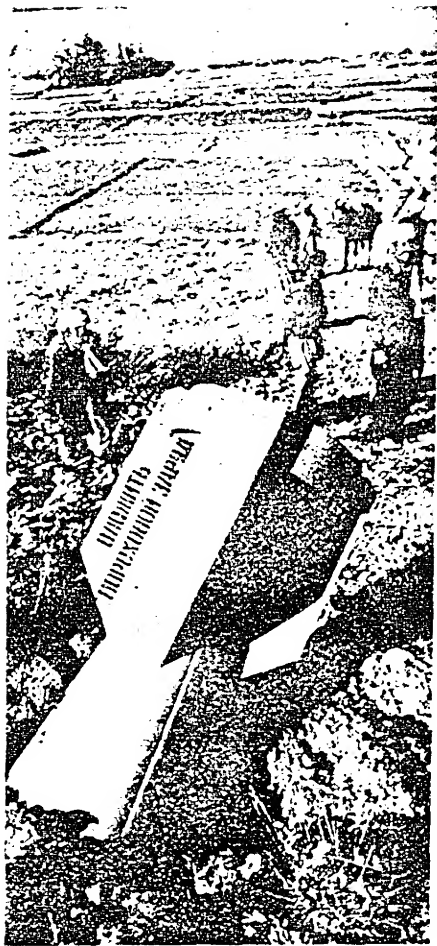
## Nationalist Resistance Movement

In contrast to the "sinking ship syndrome" that is undercutting morale in party and government circles, the morale of the *mujahidin* remains high, according to foreign visitors who have traveled with them recently. The freedom fighters can look back on a successful year during which they have put the regime increasingly on the defensive. The military situation remains a standoff, but one in which the initiative appears to lie with the *mujahidin*, although the Soviets retain the advantage of vastly superior firepower.

The major source of strength for the freedom fighters continues to be the overwhelming support they receive from the Afghan people, regardless of ethnic group or tribal affiliation. The Afghan people have suffered terribly during the past 2 years. Villages suspected of harboring *mujahidin* have been demolished in ground attacks and repeated aerial bombardment from helicopter gunships. In spite of high civilian casualties and the regime's constant flow of propaganda to discredit the resistance, the nationalist movement has continued to grow.

An important development, which has strengthened the effectiveness of the *mujahidin*, has been greater cooperation among resistance forces in the field. In a growing number of instances, including the campaigns in the Panjsher and at





Afghan villagers eyeing unexploded Soviet antipersonnel bomb. Such bombs, containing thousands of pieces of shrapnel, destroy farmlands as well as buildings.

(U.S. Government photo)

country, the *mujahidin* are still seriously underarmed in relation to the numbers of potential fighters.

While the resistance movement clearly has grown stronger and more effective throughout the year, the limits of its capabilities are clear. The *mujahidin* cannot mount a sustained offensive against a Soviet stronghold; they cannot drive Soviet forces away from major bases or the major cities; and to date they have not been able to take complete control of a provincial capital. If the *mujahidin* push too far—if they threaten to banish all symbols of Kabul's authority in a province—they, or more likely the local civilian population, inevitably will be subjected to ruthless retaliation.

The *mujahidin* have made great strides in cooperating within a given area and have taken tentative steps toward establishing a coordinating leadership council in common cause against the Soviets, but the resistance movement as a whole remains fragmented. It thus lacks the strategic advantages of national coordination. Furthermore, liberation forces occasionally fight each other to establish territorial preeminence. To succeed, these efforts at coordination will

## *The Soviets are laying the groundwork for a permanent, predominant role in Afghan affairs.*

require setting aside deep divisions between fundamentalists and moderates, traditionalists and leftists, tribal chieftains and mullahs, Pushtuns and minority ethnic groups, and among numerous rival tribes.

### **Soviet Long-Range Plans**

The Soviets are laying the groundwork for a permanent, predominant role in Afghan affairs. This effort is reflected in

the numerous major steps taken during 1981 to remake party and government institutions in the Soviet image. It is also evident in the large numbers of Afghan students dispatched to the Soviet Union for higher education and technical training and in the steady stream of technical and educational delegations traveling between the two countries.

Afghanistan is also becoming more dependent on the Soviet Union for economic assistance and trade. In November 1980, Babrak stated that Moscow was supplying 80% of Afghanistan's foreign aid. In a recent article in *Pravda*, the paper's correspondent in Afghanistan reported that trade turnover between the two countries had doubled in the last 5 years and that trade would treble by 1985.

Most official pronouncements on the Afghan economy are optimistic. The report on the 1981 budget delivered in March by then Deputy Prime Minister Keshtmand painted a relatively rosy picture, as did his economic report to the Revolutionary Council in September. But Keshtmand's speech to a seminar for local government officials in August revealed that the war has caused considerable economic paralysis. At that time, he indicated major concern about the collapse of the transportation system, about the shutting down of many factories and mines, and about inflation, which has risen sharply due to growing shortages.

The breakdown of the Afghan economy may make Afghanistan an expensive investment for the Soviets, at least in the short term. With much of the country in resistance hands, the government cannot collect taxes. The war has also caused a drop in agricultural production, which normally is a source of foreign exchange. On the plus side for the Soviets, however, they continue to receive natural gas from Afghanistan at a price well below what Moscow is asking from the West Europeans for natural gas from Siberia. Moscow's long-range planning undoubtedly envisions further integration of Afghanistan's economy with that of the Soviet Union.

Paghman, freedom fighters from outside the immediate battle zone have come to help. Cooperation among resistance units has led to a more sophisticated military strategy.

The nationalist successes during 1981 are the result, in part, of more and better weapons acquired largely through raids on military supply convoys and access to Afghan army stocks. Although the *mujahidin* are seeking aid throughout the Islamic world and the West, foreign visitors have observed during the past year that recent media reporting has greatly exaggerated the extent of external assistance. In many parts of the

# Kūwā'īl Afghanistan

## International Spotlight on Afghanistan

The primary objective of the Babrak regime's foreign policy has been to obtain international recognition of the legitimacy of the government (and by extension of the Soviet presence that is required to keep the regime in power). This policy was formalized in the May 14, 1980, proposals, which were modified on August 24, 1981, and is based on the contention that the resistance movement is a creation of outside powers. Accordingly, both sets of proposals require the cessation of all resistance as a precondition for the beginning of the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

In November 1981, the international community once again demonstrated by a third overwhelming vote in the United Nations that it rejects the Babrak government's claim to legitimacy. The resolution also authorized U.N. Secretary General Waldheim to continue U.N. efforts to seek a political settlement. The U.N. mission, originally mandated in November 1980, and other international efforts to find an opening for a negotiated solution—such as the proposals put forth by the European Community—reflect widespread international concern over the continuing Soviet occupation.

In February 1981, U.N. Secretary General Waldheim appointed then Under Secretary General Perez de Cuellar as his personal representative to seek a political settlement. Perez de Cuellar traveled to Kabul and Islamabad in April and again in early August. Following the August visit, Afghanistan announced on August 24 a modification of its procedural conditions. It agreed to trilateral talks and to U.N. participation, whereas previously it had insisted on separate bilateral talks with Pakistan and Iran and had not publicly accepted an active role for the United Nations. Subsequently, during the autumn U.N. session, Waldheim and Perez de Cuellar met separately with the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and Afghanistan and their representatives in New York.

It is not clear whether Perez de Cuellar, as U.N. Secretary General, will continue to take personal charge of this mission or whether he will name a representative. In either event, further U.N.

visits to both countries are anticipated. Perez de Cuellar's intimate involvement in the Afghanistan problem should insure that it will receive priority attention.

Afghanistan's August 24 proposals also dealt with the plan of the European Economic Community, which had been presented to Moscow by the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, on July 6. This initiative called for a two-stage international conference to settle the Afghan question. The Soviets and the Afghans rejected this plan, presumably because it excluded Afghan representation altogether from the first stage and left the Babrak regime's status unclear. The August 24 proposals entertain the possibility of an international conference, but one which would seat the Babrak regime as the sole legitimate representative of the Afghan people. There has been no indication that the Soviets or the Babrak regime are willing to make concessions on any of the key substantive issues, including that of the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

Meanwhile, the Babrak regime, guided by its Soviet sponsors, has been trying other ploys to bolster its claim to legitimacy. The warm reception which Moscow gave Karmal during his state visit in October 1980 clearly was designed to enhance his international stature. Likewise Karmal's visit to Czechoslovakia in June 1981 for a similar purpose, all the more obvious as it was timed to occur immediately after the founding congress of the NFF: the congress was to have demonstrated conclusively Karmal's claim to popular support in Afghanistan. Karmal also participated in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's 26th congress in February-March and was received by Brezhnev in the Crimea in July. The year was capped by the Afghan award presented to Brezhnev and by Babrak's state visit to Bulgaria.

A more difficult problem for the regime has been to demonstrate that conditions in Afghanistan are sufficiently settled to allow foreigners to visit Kabul safely. From November 18 to 20, the DRA staged a major propaganda event

to prove this point by hosting the 10th Conference of the Presidium of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, a Soviet-front organization. The timing of the AAPSO conference indicates that it was designed to offset the bad press emanating from the Afghan debate and resolution at the United Nations, which was taking place simultaneously. The AAPSO delegates demonstrated full support for their host, but the extremely heavy security measures surrounding their visit must have made them uneasy. Furthermore, in spite of the security, the *mujahidin* fired several rockets at the Intercontinental Hotel, the site of the conference; there were no direct hits but some damage was done.

The international community is not impressed by efforts to dignify Babrak Karmal and to portray the situation in Afghanistan as stable. Objective observers find the swelling refugee population in Pakistan and Iran more revealing of the true state of affairs. Afghans in Pakistan now constitute the largest refugee population in the world; their numbers doubled during 1981 to about 2.5 million. The refugee population in Iran has also grown considerably and is now estimated at about 1 million.

Included among the refugees are many military defectors and an increasing number of former regime officials who testify to intolerable Soviet control over government ministries and the worsening security situation throughout the country.

It should be clear to Moscow that Afghanistan will not disappear as an issue of major international concern. On the contrary, the rising volume of "inside Afghanistan" reporting by foreign journalists who travel with the *mujahidin* has contributed significantly to a greater awareness of Soviet repression and of the war of liberation being fought by the resistance. On December 16, the European Parliament passed a resolution declaring the European intention to commemorate March 21, 1982, as Afghanistan Day. March 21 is the Afghan New Year and is traditionally celebrated by Afghans as their national day. Free nations around the world are expected to follow the European lead in making Afghanistan Day a demonstration of overwhelming international solidarity with the Afghan people in their struggle against Soviet occupation. ■